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Smoking Causes Gloucester Fatal

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan and Fire Chief Barry S. McKay announced that the investigation into the Sunday, October 1 fatal fire at 5A Langford Street in Gloucester has determined that the most probable cause was improper disposal of smoking materials. The fire took the life of the 42-year old woman who resided in the apartment.

The fire was jointly investigated by the Gloucester Fire Department, Gloucester Police Department and State Police investigators assigned to the Office of the State Fire Marshal. State Police detectives assigned to Essex District Attorney Jonathan Blodgett's office also assisted in the investigation. Investigators do not suspect foul play.

Coan said, "Next week is fire prevention week and I ask every family to make sure they have working smoke alarms. A smoke alarm is your first line of defense and can give you time to escape to safety." Investigators found no evidence of working smoke alarms in the home.

According to statistics from the Massachusetts Fire Incident Reporting System (MFIRS), smoking is the leading cause of fatal fires. Coan said, "The recent passage of the fire-safe cigarette law should begin to have an impact on this fire problem in the future. It requires all cigarettes sold in Massachusetts after January 1, 2008 to be so-called 'fire-safe'."